

He said they were too concerned with keeping spending down, maintaining a surplus on the current account and other things that amounted to simply keeping their heads above water.

The Prime Minister suggested that more concrete policies needed to be enacted to deal with the crippling challenges that globalisation and trade liberalisation was going present to the region.

"There was no preparation on the most critical resource before us, people, to address the changing nature of the colonial political economy," Gonsalves said.

The poverty assessment will be conducted by the Trinidad and Tobago based firm KAIRI Consultants Limited, the same group that did the 1996 assessment.

[From *CaribNews*, July 23, 2007]

POVERTY PICTURE IN THE CARIBBEAN, BARBADOS TO UNDERTAKE ASSESSMENT SOON TO FIND OUT HOW MANY LIVING BELOW POVERTY LINE, ASSESSMENT TO BEGIN IN AUGUST

(By Tony Best)

With poverty levels running the gamut from about nine per cent in the Bahamas and 18 per cent in Jamaica to 21 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago and almost 60 per cent in Haiti, according to the United Nations, Caribbean governments are extremely sensitive to figures which indicate that poverty was either on the rise or was far too high. That explains why the Arthur Administration in Barbados is gearing up to undertake a comprehensive national poverty assessment, beginning possibly in about a month's time and using a broadened definition of poverty.

Trevor Prescod, Minister of Social Transformation, told the *CaribNews* that it was important for the government to have a firm idea about the full extent of poverty so that it could target more of its programmes, projects and resources to the task of meeting the needs of people living in dire circumstances.

"We haven't had any recent scientific analysis of it (poverty) and we are now into, probably within a month or so, we are going to have a wide assessment of poverty," the Minister said in New York after he signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Disabled, the first human rights treaty of the 21st century.

"We are now putting together the kinds of operational management structures to ensure that that assessment is carried out in a very scientific manner," he explained. "We have just established a planning unit within the Ministry of Social Transformation. We are working with the Statistical Department, the Caribbean Development Bank and we are going to have other agencies coming in as well." For instance, the University of the West Indies may be invited to carry out the actual research for the country's human development report, according to Prescod.

"When we get that report we would be in a better position to tell you if there has been any fundamental changes, if we have been able to reduce the numbers" of people living in poverty," he said. The Inter-American Development Bank carried out the last assessment of poverty in Barbados a decade ago and it showed that about 35,000 persons or an estimated 13-14 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line. "Enough time has elapsed that we need to have a new report to see if we have made any dent into that 35,000 that we talk about," Prescod added. "But it all depends on what you use as a measurement for poverty. The IDB dealt with an income consumption analysis and what the Ministry is doing, we now have a broader definition of poverty."

Specifically, it would focus on "social deprivation," taking into account access to

health care, education and other essential services rather than simply zeroing on income and consumption, he pointed out.

However, the approach the government plans to adopt would make it difficult to compare the IDB's rate with any new findings, because the latter would touch on the lives of a broader cross-section of the Barbadian population. That raises the distinct possibility that the actual number of poor people could be higher than in the late 1990s.

"It is going to be very difficult if we now have the new definition to compare it with what occurred with the IDB's assessment," the Minister said.

While he acknowledged that any assessment which showed a rise in poverty could become a political controversy, with the Opposition Democratic Labor Party leading the charge against his Ministry, Prescod said that it was clear that the Arthur Administration had attacked the problem of poverty by eliminating many of the debilitating conditions under which some Bajans had to live. "If we do an assessment we would discover there has been a change, especially in the provision of housing, many of the persons identified the last time around have since been empowered, were retooled by giving skills to those persons who previously had no skills," he argued.

"You would discover that both the Urban Development Corporation and the Rural Development Corporation have replaced the dilapidated houses. On the basis of observation alone, without having the kind of empirical figure to show, there is obvious evidence of an improvement. I think that is what worries the opposition more than anything else.

"We have done a lot of work, especially in the urban and rural communities across Barbados," he said. "We had lots of people living in horrible conditions and we have been able to make substantial changes in the lives of those persons. No one can realistically question the quality of life and the way it has improved in Barbados over the last 10 years or so. We have done exceedingly well."

WANDA A. BROWN: MISSOURI PRESS HALL OF FAME

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 3, 2007

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, on September 7th, the Missouri Press Association's Missouri Press Hall of Fame will have as its newest member a person who has devoted her life to community journalism, community philanthropy and community service, all while raising a family of public servants and serving as a business and civic partner with her late husband.

Wanda Brown was born June 16, 1918, in Franklin County, AR. She attended Draughon's Business College in Ft. Smith, AR, from 1936-1938. After graduation, she was business manager for Robbins Buick Motor Company in Ft. Smith. She met her husband, J.W. Brown, Jr., when he came into the dealership to buy tires. They were married June 14, 1946. From 1946 until 1955, they made their home in Willow Springs, MO, where J.W. owned the newspaper and also served as Postmaster. In 1955, they purchased the Harrisonville Democrat-Missourian and formed the Cass County Publishing Company. Under the ownership of J.W. and Wanda Brown, Cass County Publishing Company operated

the Cass County Democrat-Missourian, the Lee's Summit Journal, the Belton Star Herald, the Bates County Democrat and the Lawrence County Record.

Two generations of Cass County residents have known Wanda Brown as the author of a column in the Democrat-Missourian, "Wanda's Favorite Recipes," and have prepared many of them for their families. Few probably are aware that the proceeds from two of her recipe books were given to support The Way Off Broadway Players and the Cass Medical Center Foundation.

With her retirement in 1985, after 30 years as Business Manager of the Cass County Publishing Company, she accelerated her contributions to her community and to the State of Missouri. Wanda Brown has been a generous supporter of the Missouri Press Foundation, the Harrisonville Memorial Hospital, and the Harrisonville Public School Foundation. In her hometown of Harrisonville, she has contributed to the construction of the Harrisonville Baseball Fields, to the Harrisonville High School Bleacher Project, the Children's Library at the Cass County Information Center, and to the creation of a nursing scholarship at the Cass Medical Center. She was a leader in the campaigns to fund the Thermal Imaging Camera for the Harrisonville Fire Department, the construction of the Harrisonville Parks Amphitheater, and the creation of the Harrisonville Public School Foundation Endowment. She also helped to fund the Community Journalism Chair at the University of Missouri School of Journalism.

I would like to extend my most sincere congratulations to Wanda and her family—Larry and Jean Snider, Bill and Mary James, Alex, Doug, Kate, Anne, and Molly. I am certain that my colleagues will join me in commending Wanda for her decades of community service.

PROMOTING TALK RADIO

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 3, 2007

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, this Sunday will mark the 20th anniversary of the day the Federal Communications Commission voted unanimously to abolish the "Fairness Doctrine."

Under President Ronald Reagan's leadership, the "Fairness Doctrine" was removed from our airwaves because it undermined freedom of speech. Reagan was a man who realized that Washington should not tell the press what to write and say. His vision led to the development of the people's forum of talk radio.

In the wake of this decision, talk radio has grown from fewer than a hundred shows to several thousand. Today, radio commentators like Keven Cohen in Columbia, South Carolina, and Bill Edwards in Savannah, Georgia, play a vital role in bringing intelligent and thoughtful perspective to the many issues facing America.

The "Fairness Doctrine" is a relic of a bygone era. Let's keep it a part of our past and not of our future.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11th.